

TARGHEE NATIONAL FOREST

Annual Aerial Survey

September 1955

By

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The Targhee National Forest was covered by an aerial survey on September 1, 1955. The purpose of this examination was to detect, locate and describe all evidences of unusual forest insect activity. The attached map shows the flight lines and the centers of infestations detected. Unfortunately, the forest area between the Teton River and the Snake River was not covered. Poor flying weather prevailed during the three attempts to fly this area. A description of each area located by the aerial survey follows:

Area E.

Approximately 2-1/2 miles west of the town of Gerrit, a group of about 20 faded lodgepole pine trees was located. They were probably killed in 1953 by the mountain pine beetle. Only a few 1954 killed trees were scattered as singles around the group. No 1954 trees were detected in the group itself. No other groups were located in the Gerrit area. The number of scattered singles observed was not much more than you would expect to find in any lodgepole pine stand.

Area F.

South of the Lookout Butte, in the small patches of Douglas fir, there are about 4 or 5 Douglas fir beetle killed trees. These trees could indicate the start of a typical patch of Douglas fir beetle activity.

Area G.

Around the edge of Silver Lake there were groups of red lodgepole pine trees. Whether they were killed by bark beetles it was not possible to ascertain. They might possibly have been water killed. However, some of the trees appeared to be above any highwater line. It would be well to have someone from the forest visit the area. If the damage is insect caused, Forest Insect Research, Ogden, Utah should be notified so that a proper appraisal of the situation could be conducted.

Area H.

Just north and a little east of Eccles, Idaho, approximately 15 or 20 trees killed by the mountain pine beetle were located. Half or maybe more of these trees have been dead two or more years. The rest of the surrounding stand, as far as could be seen, was completely clean of any mountain pine beetle activity.

Area I.

Another small group containing 7 or 8 lodgepole pine killed by the mountain pine beetle was found in the head of Partridge Creek east of Eccles. No other groups or singles were visible in the area around Island Park Reservoir. There was very much evidence of the old mountain pine beetle epidemic, but no evidence of any new infestation whatsoever.

Area J.

West and north of Kilgore, Idaho 50 to 100 old mountain pine beetle killed trees were located just outside the forest boundary. The infestation appeared from the air to be dying down. No evidence of an aggressive outbreak was present.

Area K.

The area between Kilgore and Spencer on the south side of Signal Mountain was designated as Area K. A few scattered Douglas fir beetle killed trees, but no large groups, were observed in McGarry Creek. Throughout all of the scattered patches of timber in Area K there was evidence of budworm feeding. In McGarry Creek the defoliation was just barely noticeable. However, from Corral Creek to Three Mile Creek the damage was quite evident but still of a light intensity, except in Rattlesnake Creek where it was estimated that between 50 and 75 percent of the current growth had been damaged. On the majority of the area there was little evidence that past feeding had caused any serious defoliation. An area of approximately 20 acres in Rattlesnake Creek shows indication of defoliation for the last couple of years. This area could be the source of the infestation buildup. The slopes facing east and south have obviously been more heavily fed upon than the timber on the north and west slopes. No evidence of budworm feeding was detected except in Area K.

Area L.

Allen Canyon (Area L) on the north side of Signal Mountain contained two groups of 4 or 5 trees each that have been killed by the Douglas fir beetle. The beetle killed trees were located around some old mines. These small groups may possibly be the beginning of an epidemic such as has been in progress on many of the Douglas fir stands throughout the region.

General.

The lodgepole pine stands below Gerrit, Idaho were exceptionally free of any noticeable forest insect activity. However, the presence of Commandre rust was very evident over rather large areas of that portion of the Targhee within the State of Wyoming. No attempt was made to map in the fading caused by the rust since the observer was not in a position to evaluate disease caused damage. It does seem that infested areas could be rather accurately delineated and mapped from low flying aircraft.

